





LORD BEACONSFIELD
AND
SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD.

A Political ::

:: AND Personal ::

:: Parallel.

"LOOK ON THIS PICTURE AND ON THAT."

WRITTEN

FOR

La Minerve,

BY THE

HON. JOSEPH TASSÉ

TRANSLATED

FROM

THE ORIGINAL

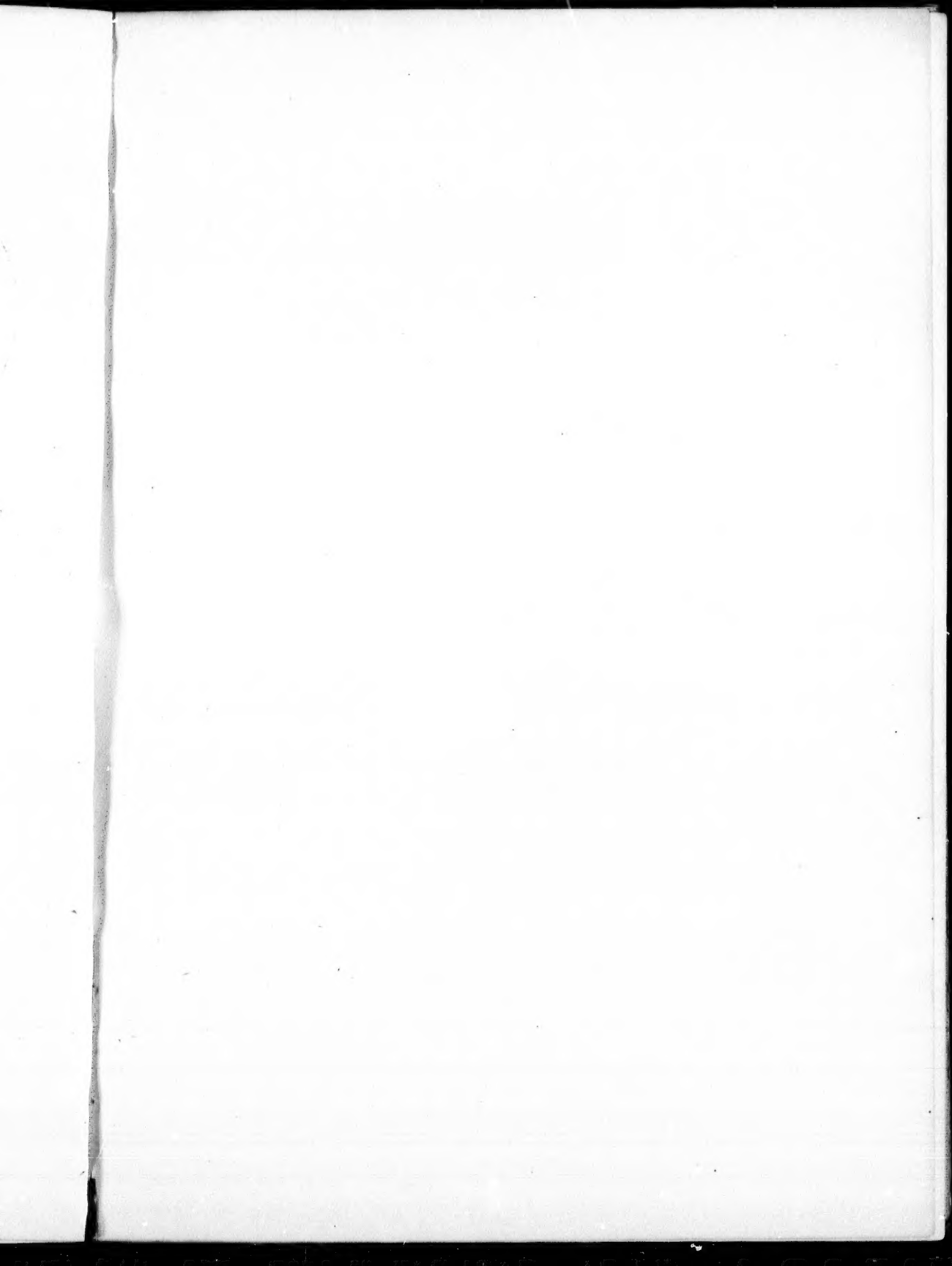
BY

JAMES PENNY.

MONTREAL,

1891.





LORD BEACONSFIELD

AND

SIR JOHN MACDONALD

PUBLIC ARCHIVES
OF CANADA

A PARALLEL

Acc. No. 33410.

1891
(62)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES
OF CANADA

INTRODUCTORY.

No one can regret more than the translator the total impossibility of reproducing in works of a purely literary character the varied charms of style. The charm of the style, at once, rich, chaste, and free, of the Hon. Joseph Tassé would linger long in the memory after this little *brochure* had been laid aside, but style is, in fact, *sui generis*, and like the sun, reigns alone.

The *theme*, however,—the grandly interesting theme—is there, and no greater theme can possibly occupy mature brains and facile pens for a long period to come.

It is the memory of our heroic contests, of our hard won battles, of the heroes who fought, and conquered, and died, in their country's service, which animates and incites our youth to manly exertion, to noble deeds worthy of fame; to a home in the hearts of their fellow-countrymen.

Can we do better than point to the brilliant examples of a BEACONSFIELD, of a SIR JOHN MACDONALD?

No! They occupy, and will continue to occupy, the highest niche in the temple of fame.

JAMES PENNY.

MONTREAL, June, 1891.



LORD BEACONSFIELD

AND

SIR JOHN MACDONALD

A PARALLEL

I

A Canadian journal recently published an engraving representing Lord Beaconsfield and Sir John Macdonald, in order to show in full relief the marvellous resemblance of these two political celebrities. Both possessed a high and resounding tenor voice, a countenance, changeable and expressive, a prominent nose, eyes at once full of intelligence and fire, a mouth and lips firm and sardonic, a forehead well developed, hair with a strong tendency to curl and slightly silvered by time; these are in fact the principal traits of resemblance in their remarkable physiognomies and physical outlines. It has even been said in the *London World*, that if Sir John Macdonald would clothe himself in a coat of the fashion usually worn by Lord Beaconsfield and would then present himself in the Chamber of Peers, no official would dream of the counterfeit and obstruct his entry, and further, that they would see Lord Salisbury press upon him his usual compliments and felicitations, without a shadow of doubt or mistrust, so perfect is the resemblance, so lifelike the mystification.

Lord Beaconsfield counts well upon his head his seventy-five winters, for until of late his health has been wonderfully

preserved; but the gout having lately made serious attacks upon him his gait has become heavy and vacillating, and we find no longer in the advance of the illustrious old man the "young Disraeli, so fresh, so rosy, and so spiritual, as he appeared to his friends, and as he was faithfully portrayed by the American "Willis."

With two lustres in hand, these two years younger in age, Sir John Macdonald carries his years so well that they are not a burden to him; they could even say truthfully that he has had a renewal of youth since the popular favour has reinstated him in power. Neither the storms of an active and turbulent life, nor the fierce and absorbing contests of the tribune, nor the immense pressure of public interests and affairs in this widely separated community and country have been able to change in any appreciable degree that marvellous nature, of which the pliancy is admirably matched by its power of resistance, passive or otherwise.

When we have known one, as him, indifferent to labor and fatigue and personal annoyance, in order to procure the acceptance of his programme by body after body of electors; when we can find one like him able to fulfil all the rude, weighty, and constantly annoying labours of *leadership*, and appear prompt, alert and vigorous after the most prolonged sittings, of the House of Commons we have a right to hope and expect several years of life combined with physical and mental power.

Does this resemblance between the two first Ministers, or Premiers, of England and Canada, limit itself to the outward physique alone? We believe not. In studying the moral and intellectual strength of these two highly interesting and very celebrated personages we shall be able to trace, in addition to the former, most striking and undeniable traits of affinity.

In his recent travels in England Sir John Macdonald went to pass several days in the magnificent retreat of his friend Lord Beaconsfield at Hughenden, and his illustrious host was much struck by the intelligence of his second self, by the similitude of his manners, by his facile and ready conversation, by his gentlemanly tone and temperament.

Both are charming, and conspicuous by their courtesy in

private life ; their conversation, turn by turn grave and light, is sown with philosophic reflections, with anecdotes, with smart and piquant repartees, of which they both appear to have an inexhaustible fund, and which they know how at need to turn with refined art against their adversaries.

To see them pass their leisure hours in a fashion so intensely happy and full of enjoyment, so full of real abandon, we should be far from suspecting that one presides over the destinies of one of the most vast, and one of the most powerful empires on earth, and that the other governs one-half of a continent destined to become a *greater Britain* by its population, as it is already by its immense territory.

How interesting must have been the first meeting of these two men, *both* the successful products of their own labors, the architects of their own fortunes and successes *both* arrived at the summit of their ambition ; how strange that two spirits so fine, so little valued in the battles of political life should have formed a mutual and spontaneous admiration for each other ; that their meetings beneath the shade of the fresh foliage of the Park at Hughenden may have been of the highest importance ; that they may have considered in detail the most important interests of the British Empire, and then and there concerted a plan most probably hardy in its scope and outline, to insure the prompt development of the latent resources of Canada. This view of their friendly meeting is one that no person, having the slightest acquaintance with the character of the two parties, would attempt to doubt.

We have proof, in any case, of the skill with which our Prime Minister has known how to seize that auspicious occasion to interest the head of the English Cabinet in our needs and welfare in the discourse pronounced recently by Lord Beaconsfield at Aylesbury—a discourse which explains and emphasizes the advantages that Canada offers to emigration, and the influence that it is doubtless called upon to exercise upon all European markets by the abundant productiveness of its soil. In effect, we have no recollection of a single example where a Prime Minister of England has dilated so long and so flatteringly upon our country, above all, on an occasion where there was no

imperative necessity to broach the subject as part and portion of the programme.

That discourse was evidently for the most part inspired by Sir John Macdonald—and Mr. Disraeli gives us to thoroughly understand—includes some few slight errors which it is not desirable to exaggerate, but it would be worth all the cavils, all the objections possible, to fix the attention of the public favorably upon the brilliant future reserved for the Canadian Confederation and the field it so opportunely opens to the energies of the ambitious youth of Gaelic or Saxon blood.

II

If these two Statesmen had a considerable resemblance in their physical, moral, and intellectual qualities there was also a distinct and appreciable analogy and resemblance in their political careers, notwithstanding there were points of very distinct contrast. The limits which the demands of journalism put to this sketch will permit us but to note and indicate the most striking points of these two remarkable characters; yet we believe that they alone will suffice to establish the exactitude and truth of the comparison.

Let us say, primarily, that their *débuts*, their entrance into public life, differed very considerably. Before entering Parliament, and even during his political career—*Lothair* dates but of the year 1870—Mr. Disraeli had not made himself a reputation, as formerly, Sheridan, by the production of comedies, but by romances, which, in general, obtained a brilliant success. He has inherited the literary talent from his father, Isaac Disraeli, who has left, as a legacy to posterity, some works which are highly esteemed, of which the best known is entitled: *Curiosities of Literature*.

Several of his works, romances, notably, *Vivian Grey* and *Contarini Fleming*—first-fruits of his youthful genius—are still read with avidity and we are sometimes tempted to believe that he has, consciously or unconsciously, personified himself in the characters of some of the heroes so charmingly conceived and brilliantly portrayed by his vivid imagination. We may ask,

for example, if he has not indicated and painted to the very letter his own aspirations in the adventures of one of his characters of Jewish race: "that young man, a stranger to that race and to that country and whose sentiments were distinctly opposed to the popular notions, had, however, signally drawn to himself the full confidence of the masses of the people and hoped to be able some future day to control and govern them." Was not this the end that Mr. Disraëli had assigned to his ambition when he avowed, of old, that he was engaged preparing to become a Prime Minister.

As for Sir John Macdonald he has never written a romance, although he is endowed with a lively and fertile imagination, nor has he ever delivered himself over to the charms of the literary syren, and yet he has evidently studied with admirable results the works of the best authors, using freely at need the choicest flowers of rhetoric or the most charming poetical quotations, apropos to the sentiment of his harangues. It was at the Bar that the Canadian Prime Minister first distinguished himself, and he would there have achieved the most signal success, had not politics tempted him away, at an early date, from his clients. But some writer has said with much wisdom, it is very rare that men truly superior to their fellows become old in the legal profession; many traverse its dusty paths, but few take up their permanent abode there. However, Sir John Macdonald returned time after time to his clients—who have always received him with a hearty welcome—on each occasion when power has slipped from his grasp, a *contretemps* he has not been slow to remedy and repair.

We ought to mention here the fact that Mr. Disraëli, before embracing the profession of literature and politics, studied law for the space of three years with an attorney, under whose roof, according to his own testimony, he slept three years, leading at the same period a gay and joyous life elsewhere during the day. That is probably all that he gained in connection with the details of English law and jurisprudence.

III

Disraëli was elected a member of the House of Commons, by the town of Maidstone, in Kent, in 1837, the year of the coronation of Queen Victoria, whose enlightened counsellor he became some years later on. He was 32 years of age. This was perhaps comparatively late in life in a country where men with political tendencies make their *début* when, as is said, *they have scarcely cut or developed their wisdom teeth*.

We know that in one remarkable instance, that of the celebrated Fox, he entered the House of Commons when he was barely nineteen years of age. It is true that it was not the fault of Disraëli that he did not take his seat at an earlier date for, many times previously, he had attempted to force the portals of parliament, but his ambition was badly appreciated and seconded by the electors, particularly by those of High Wycombe, Buckingham, who made him suffer three checks in succession, precursors of a fourth defeat at Taunton, in Somersetshire. After having represented the towns of Maidstone and Shrewsbury, he found in 1847, a county favorable to his candidature, the county of Buckingham, which has not ceased to be faithful to him until his elevation in 1876, to the House of Lords, that is to say, for a period of twenty-nine years. A series of uninterrupted triumphs having succeeded his long list of early reverses we are forcibly reminded of the prophetic character of his words, when he said to the electors at High Wycombe the day following his second defeat: "I am not discouraged. In no fashion do I feel myself beaten, possibly it is because I am so much accustomed to defeat. I can almost appropriate to myself the words of an illustrious Italian general, who when asked in his old age, how it was that he was always victorious, responded calmly, "Because, in my youth, I was almost always beaten."

The county of Buckingham can felicitate itself upon being a veritable nursery of Prime Ministers, for in fact it had furnished not less than four before electing the man who subsequently honored their choice by winning the high grade of a Peer of the realm with the title of Lord Beaconsfield. A singular and

interesting parallel is found in the case of the State of Virginia, which has been the birth place of no less than four Presidents of the United States.

Sir John Macdonald knew intuitively how to conquer at one blow, as by a flash of lightning, the suffrages of the public. He was not thirty years of age when in 1841 the City of Kingston entrusted him with the honorable task of representing it in the ancient Chamber of Assembly of United Canada. The electors remained faithful to him during the long period of thirty-one years, and—astounding fact—turned their backs upon him in the grand and most severe struggles of 1878, and took to their hearts a man highly respectable but entirely unknown to fame, and this, at the identical moment, when almost the entire country raised his flag on high with an enthusiasm beyond bounds and almost without parallel.

But what imports it to the general that he should fall upon the field of battle, so that he is able to lead his troops to victory? Yes, victory, without doubt or challenge? Sir John Macdonald was only wounded—wounded deeply doubtless in his self-love as chief of the party—but he was not vanquished. Two electoral divisions of the extreme West of Canada—Marquette, Manitoba and Vancouver, British Columbia—promptly disputed the honor of having a Prime Minister for their representative, and he finally cast in his lot with the far distant electors of Vancouver. In their turn these repaired a fault similar to the one committed by the electoral Division of East Montreal in 1872, when it refused its confidence, in a moment of popular frenzy and blindness, to the best friend of its true interests, to the chief of the Province of Quebec, to the regretted Sir George E. Cartier. This fault the electors of Provencher, Manitoba, were happy to be able to efface and condone in electing by a unanimous vote one of our greatest statesmen.

It is probable that the indifference and infidelity of Kingston is but ephemeral and that it will hasten to make it pass into oblivion on the first occasion that may fairly be offered.

That example of popular inconstancy is not rare in the history of England; several of its celebrities—notably Burke, Sheridan, Peel, Macaulay and Gladstone—have not been treated with more

regard or consideration by the "sovereign people." Similarly to Mr. Disraëli his illustrious rival Mr. Gladstone has suffered four rejections in his candidature. After having represented, turn by turn, the University of Oxford, Newark, Lancashire, and Greenwich, the leading Liberal has seen himself abandoned by each of these electoral centres and compelled afterwards to seek election elsewhere in "fresh fields and pastures new."

IV

On their entry into their respective parliaments, our two heroes were able to distinguish themselves by their talents, by their knowledge, and by their ardour in the contest. It is true that the first discourse of Mr. Disraëli was derided and whistled down, but he hesitated not in concluding to cry in his most piercing tone, "I am not in the least surprised at the reception I have received. I have commenced many things, many times, in the course of my life and I have finally succeeded. Thus it will happen some day, not far distant, that I shall compel you to listen to me." He had a full consciousness of his innate value, for it is the fact that for many long years there has been no English politician whose words have been more attentively received and treasured, although there are several of his contemporaries and rivals who can dispute with him the gift of oratory.

After twelve years of parliamentary life, Mr. Disraëli became Chancellor of the Exchequer in the cabinet of Lord Derby — who lived but a few months longer — and he took at the same time the leadership of the Conservative party in the House of Commons, which he has known how to keep, if not without contest, at least, without change or interruption, until his elevation to the Peerage. He took the same position as Chancellor of the Exchequer in the second cabinet of Lord Derby, in 1858, and again in 1866, in the third Administration formed by that statesman. Two years later, Lord Derby having put in operation his frequently announced intention of quitting his post of power, he designated Mr. Disraëli as being the only man capable of taking the reins and becoming his successor as First Minister.

"During twenty years," wrote the *Times*, "Mr. Disraëli has little by little reorganized the forces of his party in Parliament and he has led it, no less than three times, to place and power. The hour has now arrived for the faithful servant and ally to take the command in his due turn and Mr. Disraëli was able to accept a situation on a higher plane and without a moral and political decadence which would have been unworthy of him and his antecedents, and which would have done but little honour to his party."

The success of the Canadian Minister Sir John Macdonald was much more rapid. Hardly was he seated in the House the brief space of two years and a half than he was named Receiver-General in the Draper-Daly cabinet, then, quickly, Commissioner of Crown Lands. He then passed six years in opposition, from 1848 to 1854, but, if we except the forty-eight hours of existence of the Brown-Dorion Ministry in 1858—the most ephemeral cabinet we have ever known—the Liberal reign of 1863 and 1864, then the five years of the Mackenzie administration, he formed part of all the other governments which have presided over the destinies of the country, for a very long period as First Minister, and almost always as chief of the English Conservative party. That is to say, that he has been a Minister of the Crown during twenty-four years, and a member of the Lower Chamber more than thirty-five years. As to Mr. Disraëli he could count forty-two years of parliamentary life, having filled the functions of a legislator—as, it pleases us to say it in the language of the Bible—as many years as King David reigned. The influence that these two politicians have exercised during this long period of time upon the legislation of their respective countries has been too great for us to be able to adequately appreciate and discuss in this short study of their lives.

V

By the force of his talent alone Mr. Disraëli has been able to dominate the Tory party—the party the most aristocratic in the world, notwithstanding its lively prejudices against one whom they style with contemptuous lips a mere maker of

romances, without an ancestral coat-of-arms, without fortune and without having in his veins—as he said in his initial discourse to the electors—the blood either of a Plantagenet or a Tudor; and notwithstanding antipathies much more strongly pronounced against his race, the Jewish race, to which his ancestors properly belonged. We all know that the sons of an Israëlite have been admitted to the House of Commons in England only after two years of fierce and acrid contests and controversies, and long after the doors of the Canadian legislature had been thrown wide open, the colony giving, as it were, a most useful lesson in liberality and generosity of sentiment to the mother-country, whose instincts are so essentially timid, conservative and averse to change. In effect, the political emancipation of the Jews in Canada dates back to 1832, whilst it took twenty-six years longer of fierce struggle and opposition to become law in the Imperial Parliament of England.

The origin of Disraëli has been the cause of a multitude of sarcasms—a multitude of invectives against him; but far from blushing at them or seeking to hide the fact, on the contrary, he has not ceased to exalt his race—a proscribed and unjustly persecuted race—as being the most ancient race in existence. The most excruciating outrage upon that subject that he ever received came from the so-called liberator O'Connell, who said in an open and full public assembly that “the representative Jew evidently descended in a direct line from the impenitent thief who died upon the Cross.” The celebrated Irish Patriot thus revenged himself for the *volte-face* or change of opinions made by Mr. Disraëli who, it was affirmed, although but partially believed, had canvassed the electors of High Wycombe in 1837 under the broad ægis or shield of the two radicals Hume and O'Connell, after having launched a programme in which it was affirmed that he did not wear the livery of any party and that “in order to fortify and strengthen the principles of democracy it was necessary to have recourse to triennial parliaments and to a secret scrutiny.” A profession of faith so little in accordance with Conservative notions that he was always prompt and ready to deny it during the rest of his eventful career.

Notwithstanding such a multitude of obstacles to advancement

in his career as a politician Mr. Disraëli never lost faith in his *star*: he skilfully conciliated the good graces of the leading families among the aristocracy, after having drawn portraits of them in his romances but little flattering to their vanity; he triumphed over the jealousies of his rivals, by the superiority of his versatile talents; and personified the national sentiments and feelings of the people in his public speeches and harangues, as well as by his actions, to the point, that he was accepted by almost the whole nation definitively as one of themselves, a true born Englishman. Although no man has had more difficulties to contend with in his ambition to become the first Prime Minister of the Queen we cannot refuse to recognize that he has worthily and nobly responded to the high confidence reposed in him in later years. In effect, history will say that this son of a Jew—of whom Mr. Gladstone one day said in tones of reproach “that he had not one single drop of English blood in his veins”—has shewn himself as anxious for the high prestige and aggrandizement of England as any Minister who has held office before him, not even excepting Palmerston, nor yet the illustrious Pitt, that Englishman—par excellence—as they have called him. *Ego te intus et in cute novi.* “I know you thoroughly.”

In order to arrive definitely to the direction of the Conservative party Disraëli did not hesitate in 1844, to abandon his late chief Sir Robert Peel; in this he was supported by a numerous phalanx commanded by Lord George Bentinck, to whose memory his ancient lieutenant has consecrated a most interesting book. However, personal ambition cannot be said to be the single veritable cause of his defection from the ministerial benches, for Peel had commenced to relax the system of Protection with which the Conservative members, representing principally the rural districts, were, until that moment, absolutely identified. By one stroke of the pen he had abolished the Customs duties upon seven hundred articles of import, as a stepping stone to the establishment, two years after, of Free Trade at the demand of all the Liberal party, Cobden, Bright and Russell, at its head.

It was in that unpying unswerving contest, the war *à outrance*, that he waged against Sir Robert Peel—a contest that finished only with the fall of the cabinet—that Mr.

Disraëli drew upon himself the general attention, while lavishing all the resources of his oratorical talent, and of his most biting stinging sarcasms, in order to denounce the infidelity of the Prime Minister to the recognized principles of Conservatism.

It is not without interest to notice that in this instance Mr. Disraëli combatted Sir Robert Peel because of his assertion of the old flag Protection, which course he himself afterwards found it necessary to adopt. Such are the anomalies, the exigencies of political life. As a trait of English political manners and customs we may add that this implacable war—a war to the knife—was no obstruction to the fact that to-day the son of Sir Robert Peel counts among his most ardent partisans the enemies of his father in the House of Commons.

Sir John Macdonald took in 1856 the direction of the Upper Canadian Conservative party. His predecessor Sir Allan MacNab had then lost much of his force and of his popularity; he inspired also almost insurmountable antipathies among a portion of the reformist party in unison with the Tories, and it was the current idea that it was far better to confide the leadership to a man more active, less compromised, in the sharp contests of party, and less attached to the traditions of the past. Sir Allan MacNab found it difficult to pardon his former lieutenant for having been chosen as his successor, and ever voted against the cabinet of which Sir John formed a part. However that discord did not remain forever, because the Conservatives carried in 1862, their ancient chief to the presidency of the Upper Chamber.

VI

A critic of Mr. Disraëli tells us that he has educated his party to a class of ideas which are dear to his own intellect, but he never exacts too much, never stretches the cord to the point of rupture, and consents even to temporize and make opportune sacrifices, not only for his friends but, in like manner, for his enemies.

Under his direction, the Tories, occasionally intolerant and inclined to retrograde, have been transformed definitely into

Conservatives, that is to say, into men attached to the traditions of the past, attached to the very essence even of the English institutions, but knowing how to meet the necessities of modern life, of modern thought, and of modern progress ; knowing how to redress all secular abuses, knowing how to prune the venerable constitutional tree of its worm-eaten branches. "In attempting, notwithstanding my feebleness, to direct the affairs of the great party to which we are proudly affiliated," said Mr. Disraëli on a public occasion, "I am always compelled to attempt to separate in its opinions whatever is unchangeable and immutable from what is simply accidental. Always, also, I endeavour to give it a broad and natural base, because I deem it essentially and profoundly a national party, and one whose attachment to the national institutions rests upon the conviction that they are the result of the true needs and requirements of the country, and are, by that strong title, the surest guarantee of the liberties, of the greatness, and of the prosperity, of our beloved country, England."

In one of his early writings : *A Vindication of the Constitution*, Mr. Disraëli attributes the same rôle as a reformer of the Tory Party to Lord Bolingbroke — one of the contemporaries of Walpole — a rôle that he should have continued to follow beneath the cheering beams of a success much more remarkable than that of Disraëli.

"In a series of writings which, by their inspired patriotism, by their judicious and profound views, and by the eloquence with which they are so strongly permeated, have not been surpassed in our literature, Lord Bolingbroke, said Mr. Disraëli, purged Toryism of all those absurd and odious doctrines which that party had fortuitously adopted, exposed clearly its essential and permanent character, prepared for its return to power and subsequently for that popular and triumphant career that the politics of an administration, inspired by the spirit of our free and ancient institutions, should in all cases inevitably produce."

In Canada the same transformation of party ideas was effected by Sir John Macdonald, by means of the alliance of the Tories of Upper Canada and the Reformers of the Baldwin school with the French party founded by Lafontaine and Morin ; an alliance

which has given birth to the powerful Conservative party which has ruled and governed the country during so many years. That transformation is not a little surprising when we recall the ancient contests of the Tories against the rights asserted, and claims demanded, by our French compatriots before the Union : then the stirring discussions—which narrowly escaped assuming the proportions of a popular rising and outbreak—occasioned by the question of indemnifying the losses entailed upon the inhabitants of Lower Canada in consequence of the insurrection of 1837. From being sworn foes of the French and their cause, the Tories, thus regenerated, became our most faithful allies, the best, most zealous defenders of our rights.

In like manner, during fifteen years, they have assisted us to hold in check the " clear grits " who, in that long period, stirred up in a most deplorable fashion all our religious and national prejudices and antipathies.

After having well considered the faults of his party, the deputy from Kingston, become Minister, was not slow to comprehend that the union of the two races was indispensable to impress upon the nation a character of homogeneity and strength, and consolidation in its political institutions ; and the efforts he has made to this end, frequently at the expense of his ease and popularity among his particular compatriots, now, and ever, will be one of his most potent claims to consideration and glory, in this as well as in future ages.

It is not too much so say that he has worked to cement the diverse elements of French and English nationality in one grand whole with the same ardour that Mr. Disraëli has displayed in order to unite by the strong bonds of mutual interest the two powerful nations from which we have descended, and to make them march proudly, shoulder to shoulder, at the head, in the very van of civilisation.

VII

We have affirmed heretofore, that Mr. Disraëli has always had in sight the prosperity and the power of his country. He professes also the highest admiration for the English constitu-

tion, the most perfect, according to him, of all the known forms of government, ancient and modern. Let us hear what he has said in a discourse which still retains its celebrity: "If antiquity, no more than the recent experience of the modern epoch, can not offer us a similar example of a free government founded upon the widest base of popular rights, and combining the full liberties of the people, with the guarantees, that preserve the existence of a distinct class of aristocracy and a constitutional monarchy; if the cultivated spirit of the Greeks, the grand souls of the Romans, the brilliant genius of feudal Italy, have not been able to accomplish a similar happy result, let us rest satisfied, and more and more attached to that incomparable creation of our wise ancestors. Let us honor the English constitution with sentiments still more profound, and still more charged with veneration and with gratitude. That constitution, my Lord, has established civil equality in an age still rude; and its beneficent effects have preceded by several ages the sublime theories of modern philosophy; having first given us equality, they now guarantee us freedom. It has founded an empire as durable as that of Rome, as rich as the Carthaginian Republic. It has at the same time assured the most complete progress of our agricultural industry; the most vast development of our commerce; it has given us the most skilful manufacturers and artisans; victorious armies, invincible fleets of men-of-war. Under its beneficent shield and protection the intellectual power of England, its indomitable valour, its immense store of national energy, have marched side by side with its political aggrandizement. English authors have formed and moulded the spirit of Europe and impressed the breath of life upon the vigorous genius of a new world."

The Liberal party had seemed to do all in its power to enfeeble the colonial bonds, to detach from the mother-country those numerous dependencies, sown in the five portions of the globe, forming one of the most stupendous Empires that has ever existed. But Mr. Disraeli has better known how to comprehend the immense interests confided to his cares. Very far from favoring the dismemberment of England, he has worked incessantly to strengthen the bonds of union with its colonies, which

constitute its riches and its force; an union which, in the case of war, would be of incalculable advantage, and would permit it to say, as said Pyrrhus, when speaking of the Roman Empire: "I shall have but to press the land when legions will rise to my command!"

In a sphere necessarily more restricted, Sir John Macdonald has served the national cause with equal zeal. In all circumstances he has championed the advantages of the Union of Canada with England, consecrating all his energy to seat upon a firm and stable basis the British political institutions to the North of this continent.

The Canadian Prime Minister dreams a grand Anglo-Saxon alliance of which the Metropolis will be the central power, and the colonies the auxiliary powers, all united by a common devotion to Britannic interests. By adopting this plan the empire would find itself organized upon nearly the same base or system as the planetary system; England would be the pivot around which the colonies would revolve, as so many satellites, its numerous and necessary dependencies. It is truly a grand idea which should not fail to fall at once into the domain of public discussion—because our colonial relations are evidently in train for a radical transformation, of which it is difficult at present to foresee all the final consequences.

Let us gather up some few of the words that Sir J. Macdonald pronounced not many years gone by with a view to the development of that vast project that he intimated in 1865 during the debate upon the Confederation of Canada.

"Twenty-five years"—said he—"is but a day in the life of a nation, yet, however, that short space of time will see the accomplishment of this project. Great Britain will have then forty millions of souls; Canada, ten millions; Australia, several millions; Southern Africa will have obtained a considerable development; and these countries united to New Zealand, which is almost as large as England, will be just so many distinct auxiliary countries, all united around the original central power, England. I do not desire the actual representation of the colonies in the Imperial Parliament because it might reclaim the right of imposing taxes upon us, but I wish to see

an alliance accomplished between all these auxiliary powers and the Central Government, based upon a treaty similar to the one which actually unites Canada to England. That alliance should be offensive and defensive, and whoever would be bold enough to attack one of these powers would attack at the same a half-dozen of powerful nationalities sworn to a common defence."

This same superb plan was fondled and caressed in the mind of Lord Beaconsfield, in whom the colonies have ever found an enlightened defender, because he fully believed that their interests, their welfare, are intimately associated with the future welfare of England itself. As self-interest is one of the best and most powerful bonds, that immense confederation would be able probably to organize also upon a fair commercial basis, in such a manner as to facilitate the exchange of climatic products and manufactures between these numerous populations and races, who, dispersed under so many diverse latitudes would however, increase and prosper under a common flag, the flag that has so long braved the battle and the breeze, the Red Cross of old Albion.

VIII

Before these later days, the English Conservative party depended principally upon the influence of those aristocratic families, who, among themselves alone, possessed the principal portion of their native soil. *Per contra*, the Whigs recruited their ranks principally from the ranks of the merchants, tradesmen and workmen of the cities. With a rare intelligence and ability Mr. Disraeli has found means to check and triumph over the open hostility of the artisan world against the Conservative party, to draw them towards him by a comprehensive and progressive line of public policy, and then to enroll them by thousands under his own flag.

The electoral reform that he operated in 1867, was much more liberal, much more radical than that which the Whigs had proposed, who, during more than thirty years, had made of that question their chief charger, or war horse, in the wordy strife.

"They have reproached us," said Mr. Disraeli, some time after the adoption of the law, "of being opposed to a reform

which was in itself but of a minor character, and of having carried a reform very large, full and comprehensive ; but that is not, in truth, a reproach against us, it is our principal merit. We have combated the first measure because in our eyes it did not offer a positive solution of the question ; and, because, if the country demanded any solution whatever it should be a complete and permanent solution." That was not the first time that the Tories went further than the Whigs in the way of the practical development of large and generous ideas ; because it is a matter of history that the question of the emancipation of the Catholics was adopted by a Tory Cabinet, presided over by the Duke of Wellington. Furthermore, Mr. Disraëli has contended that under all circumstances, the Tories are, rather than the Whigs, true Reformers.

In addition to the law of reform Mr. Disraëli had acquired many other titles to the thanks and consideration of the working man, notably by the change and reform of the legislation upon labor in manufactories, by the law upon insalubrious dwellings, and by several other acts which gave evidence of his solicitude for the toiling sons of poverty. Thus that recognition took a very touching form when, the day following his elevation to the peerage, he was presented with an Earl's coronet, the product of a general subscription organized among the workingmen of England for the purpose of rendering fitting homage to his merit.

It was in the general elections of 1874 that the Tory Chief above all succeeded in obtaining the adhesion of the working classes, a fact that he has saluted as a reassuring sign of the permanent union of all the social forces of England, of property, of labor, and of capital.

On his side Sir John Macdonald has known how, by multifarious acts, to rally to his side the votes of the agriculturist, the manufacturer, the mechanic, and the working man, whose alliance and whose power are irresistible at the polls and on the day of polling. The head of the Canadian Conservative party has thus found the solution of a problem that his enemies have not feared to qualify as a monstrous phenomenon—the creation of a *lusus naturæ*—a Tory workingman.

IX

Assuredly, fixity of principles, of ideas—above all in political economy—has never been the character of British statesmen. Their main object has seemed to be to adapt themselves to the needs, to the circumstances, and to the dominant sentiments of the country at large. The constant changes and tergiversations of politics are unhappily of all time, and we should say that it was to excuse them that Horace wrote this celebrated verse : *Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis*. “Times change, and we change with them.”

We have seen, for example, Lord Palmerston emigrate from one camp to another, and by this means assure himself of a long uninterrupted possession of power ; one would but little suspect that Mr. Gladstone has formed part of a Conservative cabinet, and that he has published a book in favor of the Union of Church and State, he, who has become Chief of the Liberal party and has suppressed or disestablished the Church of Ireland. We have already mentioned that Sir Robert Peel has not hesitated to sail under the colors of the enemy after having been champion of the protectionist army and system.

Mr. Disraëli is no exception to the rule, and once Minister, he has wandered widely from principles that he had warmly espoused when in the opposition ranks. These variations or aberrations need not cause us much surprise, if it is true that he once enunciated the maxim that a statesman should not trouble himself about his own private opinions, but carefully search for what was most useful and necessary to his country, and conform to the spirit of the times. In 1845, he declared that protection was not a principle but an expedient ; and, the year following that protection was, according to his idea, not only a principle but that the country owed to it all its prosperity. “I affirm that the country is prosperous,” said he, in the House of Commons, “because you have given it a judicious and moderate protective law.” He was then detached from the chief of the Conservatives, Sir Robert Peel, who had repealed the Customs duties, and he feared not to designate his Government as “an organized hypocrisy.” Words that a Canadian politician

has evidently borrowed from him in applying them to the Liberal party, and which have become very much in vogue.

That did not hinder Mr. Disraëli from accepting at a later period the *fait accompli*, and even in enrolling himself under the banner of *Free Trade*, to which he has not ceased since to be faithful. "My conscience," said he in a discourse under date September 17, 1851, "renders me witness that, when the system of protection has been attacked, I have done my best to defend it, but it is one thing to defend a system which already exists, and another to replace a legislation which has been abrogated." It is true that the ideas of Adam Smith had so deeply inoculated all minds in England at the close of the famous crusade against the Corn Laws, that it would have been totally impossible to return to the ancient system of Customs duties upon corn, and, the more so, that England, thanks to the magnitude of its industries, to its perfected machinery, could easily sustain with direct advantage the concurrence and agreement of foreign countries.

During several years, however, England has seen birth given to powerful rivals who dispute with her her industrial supremacy, and, circumstances changing, the system of protection—or what is vaguely termed reciprocity of tariffs—might well become before long the economic creed of that country. In effect, very far from progressing, the cause of free exchange of commodities suffers a movement in the world incontestably of a retrograde character. Thus would it be necessary for the mother country to protect herself definitively against a great part of Europe and America in the same manner that Canada has used a policy of reprisal against the United States which had closed their markets against the major portion of our products.

If free exchange has been established in England by a protectionist of a decided stripe like Sir Robert Peel; if it has been maintained by an ancient enemy of free trade, Mr. Disraëli, *per contra*, protection has been instituted here by a man who is, we believe, favorable to the theory of free trade, or who, rather, is of opinion that the fiscal system of a country—an opinion that we entirely share—should be based upon the needs and the pressing circumstances of the present hour.

It is quite true that a free exchange of products is inapplicable to Canada—even in supposing that they would be able to replace the indirect imposts of the Customs by direct imposts of taxes in order to produce the necessary amount of revenue—since the American Republic, with which for some years past the greater part of our commerce has been made, not only refuses to give free access to our goods, but loads them with duties almost prohibitive. It is that unfriendly course of action which has made so many of our theoretical free traders acquiesce in and sanction the national policy recently inaugurated by the Conservative party.

X

In a speech made by Mr. Disraëli, some years since, he emitted the hardy opinion, that England was an Asiatic power of which the centre of gravity was to be found in Calcutta.

Imbued with that startling idea, which lays claim to a certain amount of truth and justice,—the British Empire having in Asia alone three parts of its subjects, about one hundred and fifty millions—the Tory Chief has moved heaven and earth, sea and land, in the attempt to extend the influence of his country, and to assure it a free untrammelled route towards its immense oriental possessions. It is with that view that it has taken the necessary measures to control the company charged with the administration of the affairs of the Suez Canal—that canal designed and opened by a French genius, M. de Lesseps, for the great future profit of England: it is with that view it has acquired from Turkey the isle of Cyprus—that isle so celebrated in ancient history, and which had notably been conquered by Richard Cœur de Lion in the twelfth century: it is in the same view and with the same policy, that it has resisted the encroachments of the Russian colossus, the greatest enemy of the British Lion, who desires to aggrandize himself in the East not less than in the West: it is with the same view that Mr. Disraëli has found means to add to the Crown of Queen Victoria a pearl of inestimable price, the glorious title of EMPRESS OF INDIA, a title that none of the predecessors of the Queen until then had dared to stretch forth a hand to grasp.

At the commencement of this little treatise, we have said that Mr. Disraëli had appeared to desire to personify some one of the heroes of his romances, or, otherwise, to accomplish some of the high deeds or projects, more or less ambitious, that he has attributed to them. That is undeniably true in so far as what concerns Asia and Africa is concerned — the cradle of his own ancestors—which he has visited with intense interest in his youth, and which have inspired his most vivid and gorgeous descriptions, as a dream of surpassing splendour and glory, a dream even of the celestial regions. If there is any doubt on this subject, read, for example, the language of the Emir Fakredin, in the justly celebrated romance *Tancred*, published about thirty years ago: "You Englishmen, your duty is to carry out in its fullest detail the grand conceptions which of old, permeated the heart and brain of Portugal. You will do well to quit a little country, which is no longer suitable to your power, nor equal to your aspirations, for another, a vast and magnificent empire! Let the Queen of England assemble her fleet, let her embark her treasures, her ready money, her vessels of gold and her invaluable arms, and so, escorted by all her court and the principal personages of her realm, let her transport the seat of her Government to Delhi! She will find there an excellent army and inexhaustible revenues. For my part, I shall take care of Asia Minor and of Syria; it is by the Persians and the Arabs they can govern the Afghans. We shall recognize the Empress of India for our Sovereign, and we shall assure her of the guardianship of the shores of the Levant. If she desires it, she shall have Alexandria as she has Malta; and that shall be the greatest, grandest, Empire that the sun has ever shone upon; and in addition to all this, the new Empress will be freed for ever from the ennui and annoyances which her two Chambers of Deputies, the Houses of Lords and Commons, incessantly cause her."

It is no longer a portion of this fantastic programme — if we except, doubtless, the suppression of the two houses of parliament — which would be likely to preoccupy Lord Beaconsfield after he became Prince Minister. As an English writer said, one however, who was in entire sympathy with his theories, "if he

has not embarked his Queen for the country of sandal wood and diamonds he has introduced the Sepoys into Europe in her defence, and he has proclaimed her the veritable Empress of India. He has made her sovereignty of Asia Minor to be recognized, and if he has loosed his hold upon Alexandria in order not to offend French sympathies he has obtained the *quid pro quo* by taking possession of the Isle of Cyprus."

In a sphere certainly more restricted, the Canadian first minister pursues the same course, at the very moment, of working to open up to free colonization the vast territories of the North-West—destined to receive in the near future millions of inhabitants, and to modify the economical conditions of the whole world—he consecrates all his energies in the construction of a railroad to the Pacific Coast—the now well known C. P. R.—which, once in operation, will be the route the most rapid, the most direct, the most free, between England and all the various countries in the East. Thus then, the mother country could not do better to favor and encourage her own true interests than in facilitating with all her influence, with all her strength, the permanent establishment of that colossal enterprise. In addition to the important fact that the road will give a second and an independent route, and unobstructed communication with the Indies, it will develop a vast territory where England will be able to locate the surplus of her energetic population which, too often, is directed towards the United States, whose political feeling is almost always antagonistic to the interests of England and Englishmen. The millions of dollars expended in emigration will consequently be more profitable to England than the fabulous sums engulfed in ruinous expeditions to the North Pole in the barren hope of finding the shortest route between Asia and Europe.

XI

They have reproached Sir Robert Peel, said a biographer of Mr. Disraëli—with being only, in a medium fashion, amiable towards his friends, and of reserving all his smiles and courtesies for his enemies, all, in fact, that there was in him of kindness and courtesy. The partisans of Mr. Disraëli would not be

justified in making the same reproach against him. But if he has much regard for the sheep of his flock, he manages no less the sheep of his neighbour's flock, and his sarcasms—of which he makes use to a high degree—are sown broadcast with a free hand. It was a past master in raillery and banter who has said in one of his writings: *a smile for a friend, a sneer for the world, is the best way to govern mankind*. This can be translated in the following fashion; "a smile for one's friends, a sarcasm for the outside world, it is thus that they govern all human nature."

In the same manner as the head of the English Conservatives, Sir John Macdonald knows how to conciliate the affection and the devotion of his partisans. He has for them, in general, those friendly regards and attentions which rarely fail to produce an effect. He spares not his adversaries when it is necessary to strike, but he avoids sterile and unseemly displays of passion, confining himself usually within the bounds dictated by a mind richly endowed with a smart, keen, and sparkling spirit of raillery and repartee. We can see that he fully comprehends all the value of that mixture of good humour and *sang-froid* that Lord Liverpool recommends to politicians: an ounce of good temper is worth a pound of wit; "*une once d'empire sur soi-même vaut toute une livre d'esprit*." In addition, his rare courtesy and happy style of address have often gained him valuable recruits, even among his most hardy and energetic antagonists.

It would be ever an error to believe that Sir John Macdonald does not excite intense hatred in his enemies' camp. In fact, none of his predecessors have been attacked with more warmth and pertinacity by the Liberal party, than he has, for they cannot pardon him for having for so long a period closed the portals of power against them. They have not been content to reproach him with all his political faults and shortcomings, but they have raked over every act of his private life, without shame or mercy, to find an effective arm against him. During thirty years, if we except the ephemeral period of the alliance between Brown and the head of the Conservative party, having in view the establishment of the Confederacy, there has been scarcely one

single number of the *Globe*, in which Sir John Macdonald has not been painted as the very Beelzebub of his party. Consequently we can see here another *fruit* of resemblance to Mr. Disraëli, who says than to have many enemies — *to be the best abused man of England*,—nothing is more interesting.

“Glory is more brilliant after a calumny

“And shines much brighter after it has been seen tarnished.”

To neither of the two, Beaconsfield nor Macdonald, would they be able to address the reproach that they have made against Palmerston, that of surrounding himself with mediocre talent in order that he himself might be seen to greater advantage, because they are compelled to enlist in their party, politicians of an appreciable value, and of bringing forward into the full light of day young and rising men of merit. Desirous above all of rendering the public service as perfect as possible, they have not even hesitated to confer most important charges into the hands of such of their opponents as they believed more fitted than any others to perform the duties in a satisfactory and worthy manner.

We have seen that Mr. Disraëli has almost always acted as Chancellor of the Exchequer in his ministerial career. Finance, however, was not the characteristic bent of his genius and talent — although that maker of romances had learned to treat the most abstract matters with acumen and clearsightedness — and he is probably only second in that respect to Mr. Gladstone, who has acquired considerable reputation by his brilliant statistical disquisitions and his economic reforms. Mr. Disraëli was content, ordinarily, to explain the position of affairs in a very brief and lucid manner, and once even his speech upon the budget lasted but the brief space of fifty-five minutes, while most of his predecessors, Chancellors of the Exchequer, would have consumed several hours with a no more lucid result. He abandoned to the secretaries of the treasury the task of discussing and elucidating all the minor details, saying to himself, doubtless, *Dux sum et super arithmeticeam*. “I am the chief and above all figures.”

Even if finance did not possess much attraction for him, he understood the art of politics, the constitutional history, and the mechanism of the English constitution better probably than

any of his contemporaries. Like him, even here, Sir John Macdonald excels in this triple acquirement, several of his discourses and of his State papers distinctly shew, for example, a knowledge of constitutional right and law, that few of the representatives of the mother-country possess to the same degree.

Neither the one nor the other, are, properly speaking, great orators. Their language, fluent, easy, and incisive is, perhaps, less eloquence than action spoken. That, however, is no barrier to the fact, that they know how, better than any of their compeers, by the selection of their words, to control a House, to mould it in favour of their own ideas, their own sentiments, the which is, certainly, one of the grandest triumphs of the oratorical art.

As a remarkable result of the power of eloquence we do not remember one more vividly stamped upon our memory than that obtained by Sir John Macdonald when he induced, by the simple force of his persuasive and convincing arguments, the House of Commons to approve by a considerable majority, of the Treaty of Washington. We all know that that treaty, in which he took part as a special representative of Canadian interests, raised, at that particular epoch, the most lively opposition throughout the whole of the country, notwithstanding that its results have not been as injurious or as fatal as was at first apprehended. The majority which ratified the treaty was composed, not only of his partisans, a great number of whom were at first obstinate and intractable, but of several Liberals who had in advance condemned the convention as sacrificing the national interests to the profit and advantage of the United States.

Both understood to the highest degree the strategic parliamentary position. None of their rivals knew better how with consummate address to take advantage of the infinite resources of that difficult art. They excelled in masking the points of their play, in detecting the weak places in their opponents' cuirass, and in placing snares at their feet which it was almost impossible for them to avoid. In addition they were prompt to take at need the most hardy, the most energetic decisions, of adopting the most unexpected, the most surprising measures, which naturally put to full route all the calculations and plans

of the enemy. "That is not all," wrote Mr. Disraëli in his romance, *Vivian Grey*, "to be able to govern men it is necessary also to be able to astonish them." No diplomatist of the present day practises with more success upon the vast theatre of European politics the art of sudden surprises than did Mr. Disraëli in his day.

XII

True to the historic example of many celebrated personages both of these prominent characters owed much to their wives. These play sometimes a rôle more considerable than we are apt to imagine in the political arena, their influence being in inverse ratio to its visibility; the more strong the less perceptible. We can truly say that Lady Beaconsfield has not a little contributed to assure a brilliant future to her husband in bringing him a considerable fortune, without which it is almost impossible to achieve success in England. "I do not run after money,"—said Macaulay—"but every day I am more and more convinced that ease in circumstances is necessary to any man who desires to become illustrious, and render essential service to his country."

When in 1839, Mr. Disraëli solicited the hand of his future companion, she was the widow of a rich proprietor, Mr. Wyndham Lewis, who had previously represented the town of Maidstone, in Kent. In no wise handsome, at least twelve years older than her husband, not even remarkable for high intelligence or wit, but endowed with clear good sense and calm healthy judgment, she has given him, in her unalterable affection and devotion, true domestic happiness "sole source of a pure and permanent joy," as said the author of the romance, the *Young Duke*, who is no other than Disraëli himself. At the very apex of his brilliant career, Mr. Disraëli acknowledged his obligations to his wife, even proclaiming that he owed all his success in life to her influence upon him.

Following a very ancient custom, they distribute every year in Dunmow, in the County of Essex, a fitch of bacon to the married couple who can swear upon the Bible before the altar of the Church, that during a year and a day, the domestic peace and comfort has not once been troubled by any matrimonial

quarrel. Now, Mr. and Mrs. Disraeli did not hesitate some years since, to present themselves before the authorities of Dunmow and demand the prize of an entire year of patience, love, and mutual agreement, and their demand was acceded to with all the due formalities of the occasion.

Although not dating further back than twelve years, the union of Sir John Macdonald with Miss Susan Agnes Bernard, daughter of the late Hon. M. Bernard of Jamaica, has had, also, the most happy influence upon the latter part of his career. A woman of high intelligence, of great distinction of manner, of a generous and devout disposition, Lady Macdonald has nobly shared the bad as well as the good fortune of her husband, and has gained the respect of all classes of society. Thus when the chief of the Conservative party triumphantly traversed the country at the close of the last electoral campaign saluted by the acclamations of the popular voice, even in the strongholds of his opponents, Lady Macdonald has frequently had a full share of the ovations decreed to her husband, receiving most flattering addresses accompanied by presents of considerable value.

XIII

Very frequently they have announced the retirement of the two politicians who are the subject of this parallel, but we do not believe that either of them has ever given a serious thought to such an idea. Their party has never sought out other chiefs, for, although fully sensible of all their faults and errors, they were accustomed to believe that they could not entrust the command of their party to more firm and skilful hands. On the other side, the chiefs would not be able to find partisans more indulgent and more faithful, and they arrived at the natural conclusion that they were each made, one for the other. In order to give him a tangible mark of their appreciation of his services the friends of Sir John presented him, some years gone by, with a considerable sum of money, the fruit of a public subscription, duplicating, by this means, the idea of a tangible recompense for acknowledged services formerly awarded to Fox, the British statesman.

When in the year 1873 Mr. Disraeli was elected Lord Rector of the university of Glasgow—an eminent distinction recently conferred upon Mr. Gladstone—he was invited to a grand banquet in that city, and he embraced the opportunity to remind his hearers in tones of legitimate satisfaction that he had been head of the Conservative party for a longer period than the annals of England could show to have been the lot of any other man. He reckoned then twenty-five years and retained office five years longer, thirty in all, being just five years more than his prototype Sir John Macdonald. The words that he then employed have a more than ordinary interest: “The reason why I have remained for so long a period at the head of the party, in circumstances at once difficult and discouraging, is, that the party I represent is the most generous and the most indulgent that has ever existed. Sometimes, I can scarcely control my laughter when I hear constantly repeated insinuations from people who pretend to know the secrets of the world of politics, and say that the Conservative party ardently desires to get rid of my services. Every time that I have expressed a desire to abandon the direction of the party it has with extreme benevolence begged of me to retain it, and if in the course of events I commit an error the only difference that can be perceived in its attitude toward me is that its indulgence, kindness, and personal consideration is more than redoubled.”

Political life, with all its alternatives of reverses and successes is, in truth, the native element of both these men, and they would have found it difficult to live without it. They have made the service of the country not only a duty but a portion of their life and being. Consequently it always appeared probable that they would stand in the breach until the last moment, succumbing only, as the late Lord Chatham, after having pronounced a discourse on the floor of the House, to defend the interests of the nation.

We come now to speak of the faults and errors of these two famous prime ministers. Neither the one, nor the other, ever pretended to possess infallibility, and, on more than one occasion, they have declared that, if it was possible to live over again certain portions of their political life they would act very diffe-

rently. We have heard Sir John frankly avow his errors in language very similar to that used by Mr. Disraëli, some years gone by, before the electors at Buckingham. "No one knows better than I, that in the course of a turbulent political life and, already, alas, of a duration much prolonged, I have done many things that I much regret, I have said many things that I much deplore; but the career of a public man should be judged as a whole and by its dominant characteristics. As to me, I can say, in all sincerity, than I have always sought to maintain the grandeur of my country; I have never entertained one single thought of a low, sordid, or exclusively personal interest; and of all the ambitions that have most stirred my mind the one, that in all circumstances reigned paramount, was to deserve the esteem and sympathy of my fellow citizens, no matter under whatever political banner they may have been ranged."

Although neither one nor the other was young, their disappearance from the busy scenes of public life was looked for long before it took place. Longevity was the rule in Disraëli's family. This last was often pleased to recall the fact that his grandfather had lived to be ninety years of age, and that his father had died in his eightieth year, and even then the robust old man had been carried off by a prevalent epidemic.

At the age of Sir John, the public men of Europe are not always at the apogee or summit of their glory. The greatest ministers of the epoch are very old men, and it answers our purpose to mention Disraëli, Bismarck, and Gortschakoff, without counting those who still, by their lively intelligence and experience, continue to hold the sceptre of power. Thiers, Guizot, and Palmerston, all died octogenarians, the last even while he was first minister and a member of the House of Commons. The most brilliant acts of the astonishing career of Disraëli himself were accomplished while he was a septuagenarian. Let us point out in particular, the protectorate of Asia Minor, the creation of the Empire of the Indies, the acquisition of the Suez Canal, the treaty of Berlin, one of the most remarkable diplomatic successes of modern times.

In approaching the termination of their earthly course, it must have been a source of gratification to them to know that they

had for so many years preserved the esteem of their countrymen, that they had reached the zenith of ambition by having obtained the highest and most enviable position to which an English subject in their respective countries could possibly aspire; and that the recompenses they received for their services were of the most signal and striking description.

Queen Victoria could not render a more flattering homage to Mr. Disraëli than, at the very moment he was about to resign power, conferring a Peerage on his noble companion and wife, who thus became Countess of Beaconsfield several years before the elevation of her husband to the House of Lords. In fact, it is possible to cite but a very few examples of a distinction of that nature in the whole history of England, one, notably, being the wife of the premier Pitt, created a Peeress in her own name, while that illustrious man, her husband, retained still the more humble title of Lord Chatham.

It is well known that Mr. Disraëli refused the Peerage when it was first offered to him, not being desirous, so relatively early, to escape the cares and burdens of his official position. He disliked, probably, to follow the example of Lord Chatham, whose influence perceptibly waned when age induced him to leave the arena, and abandon the active contests of the House of Commons—called proudly *the first and finest assembly of gentlemen in Europe*—in order to take refuge in the more peaceful but more imposing walls of the House of Lords, which has often been compared, and with reason, to the Roman Senate. Very far from diminishing, the influence of Lord Beaconsfield had not ceased to increase during several years, and his activity sometimes manifested itself under the most audacious forms in the diplomatic contests of the entire world. Possessing the confidence of the whole nation, enjoying an almost absolute power, overwhelmed with the most signal honors, we can say of him as of his predecessors :

“ Nor King, nor deputy of Kings,
“ Yet greater than all Kings.”

On his side, Sir John Macdonald has obtained the most eminent distinction which has ever been conferred upon a representative

of a Colony when he was named as member of the Privy Council of England. In his recent travels beyond the sea, the Queen has evinced the most flattering regard for his character, inviting him to her private table; and we have already mentioned that he was the welcome guest of her Prime Minister, honors, doubtless, to which he was duly sensitive.

There is no shadow of doubt but that he has not had so vast a theatre for the exercise of his talents as the English statesman, but we do not flatter ourselves in saying that he was sufficiently brilliantly endowed with talent to enable him to play a leading rôle among the six hundred and fifty members who compose the House of Commons in England. Posterity would not forget his name, even had nothing been done, in order to preserve it, but his own most important contribution towards laying the base of that grand and now imposing Confederation, which, following the prophetic words of Montalembert, would one day, from the mouth of Oregon to that of the St. Lawrence, become a powerful rival of the United States. *A name inscribed upon such a monument cannot possibly perish, or fade into oblivion.*

Whatever may be the judgment of history, the two First Ministers of England and Canada—of whom we have just compared the career—are brilliant examples of the success reserved to talent, to industry, and to perseverance, in countries absolutely free. If they have been able truthfully to say that it is possible to find the *bâton* of a field marshal in the knapsack of every French soldier, we can also say without danger of contradiction that there is no step so high in the social and political scale to which every subject of Her Britannic Majesty, Queen Victoria, may not attain, who knows how, and, knowing, tries, to merit the confidence and support of his fellow citizens.

JOSEPH TASSÉ.



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